



The impact of the Tsunami on hospitalizations at the tertiary care hospital in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka

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Abstract:

OBJECTIVE: Sri Lanka's human, physical, social, and economic resources suffered a massive impact after the tsunami of December 26, 2004. To assist in preparing for future disasters, the authors sought to characterize the pattern of hospitalizations from the main impact zone in the Southern Province. **DESIGN:** Retrospective chart review. **SETTING:** Patients admitted to Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya, the only tertiary care hospital in the Southern Province. **PATIENTS, PARTICIPANTS:** All hospital admissions on the day of and week following the tsunami, and a random sample (5 percent) of admissions from the month preceding, and the 3 months following the tsunami were coded according to the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, analyzed, and geomapped. **INTERVENTION:** N/A. **MAIN OUTCOME MEASURE(S):** The overall daily number of hospitalizations increased by 50 percent on the day of the tsunami and decreased in the following week. **RESULTS:** Before the tsunami, injuries typically accounted for 20 percent of hospital admissions. However, injuries were markedly higher (89 percent of the total) on the day of the tsunami and remained elevated (35 percent) during the following week. After the initial peak in injuries (including near drownings), there was no increase in the frequency of infectious, cardiac, or psychiatric admissions. **CONCLUSIONS:** Injuries (including near drownings) were the most common cause of admissions immediately after the tsunami. The distribution of specific diagnoses differed from that seen after other natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes. A central aspect of disaster relief operations and planning includes a thorough understanding of the postdisaster health effects and changes in disease patterns.

Source: Ask your librarian to help locate this item.

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Early Warning System:

resource focus on systems used to warn populations of high temperatures, extreme weather, or other elements of climate change to prevent harm to health

A focus of content

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event, Human Conflict/Displacement

Extreme Weather Event: Flooding

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Asia

Asian Region/Country: Other Asian Country

Other Asian Country: Sri Lanka

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Injury

Medical Community Engagement:

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Children, Elderly

Resource Type:



format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Resilience:

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content